

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-05 PRS-01 L-03 INSE-00 PM-05
SCA-01 SS-15 SSO-00 NSCE-00 VO-03 INR-07 INRE-00
CIAE-00 H-01 /056 W
-----059996 252236Z /14

O P 252105Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6000
INFO COMNAVBASE GUANTANAMO BAY CUBA PRIORITY
SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
CNO WASHDC PRIORITY
CINCLANTFLT NORFOLK VA
COMNAVFORCARIB ROOSEVELT ROADS PR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PORT AU PRINCE 3173

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF, HA
SUBJECT: HAITIANS AT GUANTANAMO: PROPOSED PRESS GUIDANCE

REF: P 242031Z AUG 77 COMNAVBASE GUANTANAMO

1. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT ANY PRESS GUIDANCE ON 101 HAITIANS AT GUANTANAMO SHOULD EMPHASIZE ROUTINE PROCESSING OF UNDOCUMENTED ALIENS ARRIVING ON U.S. CONTROLLED TERRITORY. THEIR PRESENCE AT GUANTANAMO SHOULD BE PUT IN CONTEXT OF LONG-STANDING ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION BY HAITIANS OF WHOM OVERWHELMING MAJORITY SEEK BETTER ECONOMIC PROSPECTS. SINCE NONE OF THE HAITIANS REQUESTED POLITICAL ASYLUM WHEN THEY ARRIVED IN GUANTANAMO WE BELIEVE MATTER SHOULD BE DEALT WITH IN TERMS OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO PEOPLE IN DISTRESS AND APPLICATION OF PERTINENT IMMIGRATION LAWS. THEREFORE WE RECOMMEND PRESS GUIDANCE REFTEL BE REVISED AS FOLLOWS:

A. QUESTION WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? WHO DO YOU REPRESENT? WHAT OFFICE ARE YOU FROM?

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ANSWER WE ARE A TEAM FROM THE IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE AND THE DEPT OF STATE. WE ARE HERE TO CONDUCT ROUTINE INTERVIEWS OF A GROUP OF 101 HAITIANS RESCUED BY THE NAVAL FORCES AT GUANTANAMO.

B. Q. NO CHANGE FROM REFTEL.

A. NO CHANGE FROM REFTEL.

C. Q. IS THIS CASE RELATED TO THE TWO HAITIAN BOATS THAT RECENTLY LANDED IN MIAMI?

A. ONLY IN THAT BOTH GROUPS ARE APPARENTLY PART OF LONG-STANDING PATTERN OF ATTEMPTED ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION BY PEOPLE FROM THE POORER PARTS OF HAITI SEEKING BETER ECONOMIC PROSPECTS ELSEWHERE.

D. Q. NO CHANGE FROM REFTEL.

A. NO CHANGE FROM REFTEL.

E. Q. ARE THE HAITIANS GOING TO BE ALLOWED TO STAY HERE?

A. THEY CANNOT REMAIN INDEFINITELY IN GUANTANAMO. THEY WERE ADMITTED BECAUSE THEIR BOAT WAS BADLY LEAKING. INSPECTION OF THE BOAT REVEALS THAT IN ITS PRESENT CONDITION IT IS UNSEAWORTHY. SINCE THEY CANNOT LEAVE ON THEIR BOAT, WE ARE NOW ATTEMPTING TO DETERMINE WHEN THEY WILL DEPART GUANTANAMO.

F. NEW QUESTION WHERE WILL THEY GO WHEN THEY LEAVE GUANTANAMO?

A. THAT WILL DEPEND UPON THE REVIEW OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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INFORMATION OBTAINED IN THE INTERVIEWS.
(IF PRESSED) WE EXPECT THAT MOST, IF NOT ALL, WILL RETURN TO HAITI.

G. Q. NO CHANGE FROM REFTEL.

A. NO CHANGE FROM REFTEL.

H. IN ANSWER TO REFTEL QUESTION, WE SUGGEST THAT EXCUSE OF "CONTAGIOUS MEDICAL PROBLEMS" BE DE-EMPHASIZED.

I. NEW QUESTION HAVE ANY OF THE HAITIANS REQUESTED POLITICAL ASYLUM IN THE U.S.?

A. NONE OF THE HAITIANS REQUESTED POLITICAL ASYLUM UPON ARRIVAL.

SUPPLEMENTARY

QUESTION: HAVE ANY OF THE HAITIANS ASKED FOR POLITICAL ASYLUM IN THE U.S. SINCE THEY ARRIVED?

A. IT IS THE GENERAL POLICY TO MAINTAIN THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF REQUESTS FOR ASYLUM BY ALIENS FROM ANY COUNTRY.

J. DELETE--SUBSUMED IN QUESTION A.

K. NO CHANGE FROM REFTTEL.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PORT AU PRINCE 3173

L. Q. WITH THE EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS BY THE
ADMINISTRATION, DO YOU CONTEMPLATE
SENDING INDIVIDUALS BACK TO A COUNTRY
SUCH AS HAITI WHICH HAS BEEN KNOWN AS
HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATOR? ISN'T THIS
INCONSISTENT WITH THE HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY?

A. THE MERE FACT THAT AN INDIVIDUAL IS FROM A
COUNTRY THAT HAS BEEN KNOWN TO HAVE A "HUMAN
RIGHTS PROBLEM" DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN
THAT A SPECIFIC INDIVIDUAL FROM THAT
COUNTRY HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF "POLITICAL"
HARASSMENT.
WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN ASSURANCES BY THE HAITIAN
GOVERNMENT (WE HAVE DELETED SPECIFIC REFERENCE
TO FOREIGN MINISTER SINCE HE WAS SPEAKING ON
BEHALF OF PRESIDENT AND ENTIRE GOH) THAT
INDIVIDUALS, SUCH AS THESE, CAN SAFELY RETURN
TO HAITI AND WILL NOT BE PUNISHED FOR THEIR
ILLEGAL DEPARTURE FROM THAT COUNTRY.

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M. Q. WHEN DID YOU GET THE ASSURANCES FROM THE
HAITIAN GOVERNMENT THAT HAITIAN NATIONALS WHO
ILLEGALLY DEPARTED HAITI WOULD NOT FACE ANY
RETRIBUTIONS UPON THEIR RETURN?

A. ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS, OVER THE PAST FEW
YEARS, WHICH INCIDENTALLY WAS PUBLICLY
RELEASED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD OF
APRIL 19, 1977, THE HAITIAN GOVERNMENT HAS
BOTH FORMALLY AND INFORMALLY ASSURED US THAT
HAITIAN NATIONALS WOULD NOT BE PERSECUTED
FOR THEIR ILLEGAL DEPARTURE FROM THAT
COUNTRY. THE HAITIAN GOVERNMENT IS AWARE OF
THIS GROUP'S PRESENCE ON GUANTANAMO AND HAS
GIVEN SPECIFIC ASSURANCES THAT NO ACTION
WOULD BE TAKEN AGAINST THESE INDIVIDUALS FOR
THEIR ILLEGAL DEPARTURE AND THAT UPON THEIR
RETURN TO HAITI THEY WILL BE ASSISTED BY
BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE HAITIAN RED CROSS
ON RETURNING TO THEIR HOMES SHOULD THEY WISH
TO DO SO.

2. WOULD APPRECIATE LEARNING COMPOSITION OF PRESS PARTY EXPECTED
AT GUANTANAMO AUGUST 29 AND ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED. WE MAY
BE ABLE TO OFFER FURTHER GUIDANCE IF ANY INDIVIDUALS HAVE HAD
HAITIAN EXPERIENCE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEES, INSTRUCTIONS, PRESS RELEASES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 25-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PORTA03173
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770308-0132
Format: TEL
From: PORT AU PRINCE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770824/aaaaathz.tel
Line Count: 201
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 20607053-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1486779
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HAITIANS AT GUANTANAMO: PROPOSED PRESS GUIDANCE
TAGS: SREF, HA, CU, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/20607053-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009